

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 011535

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

S E C R E T STATE 011535

EXDIS MILITARY ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOL SEOUL 0329 SENT ACTION SCSTATE JAN 17; REPEATED TO YOU
QUOTE

S E C R E T SEOUL 0329

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY AND CINCPAC
ROUTINE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, KS

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE ROK THIRD COUNTRY PROCUREMENT OF MAJOR
MILITARY ITEMS

REF: STATE 7320

1. DURING CALL ON PRIMIN JAN 16 WITH UNDER SECRETARY
MAW, LENGTHY DISCUSSION WAS HELD ON SIBJECT OF ROK
THIRD COUNTRY PROCUREMENT. CONSIDERATIONS OUTLINED
IN REFTTEL WERE RAISED AND OBVIOUSLY FULLY UNDERSTOOD.
HOWEVER, PRIMIN REMAINED NONCOMMITTAL.

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2. WITH REGARD TO PROPOSED EXOCET PROCUREMENT, WE

EMPHASIZED LIKELIHOOD OF CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM, PARTICULARLY AT THIS TIME WHEN SOME MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ARE SEEKING TO REDUCE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE APPROPRIATIONS. THE PRIMIN RESPONDED THAT THE ROKG APPRECIATED THE POTENTIAL OF THE PROPOSED PURCHASE FOR ADVERSE CONGRESSIONAL REACTION. NEVERTHELESS, HIS GOVERNMENT FELT IT NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE DETERRENT CAPACITY ESSENTIAL TO PRESERVE PEACE AND BELIEVES THIS OBJECTIVE CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY BY DEMONSTRATING TO THE NORTH THAT ANY PROVOCATION ON ITS PART WOULD BE CERTAIN TO MEET RETALIATION. THE ROKG HAD BEEN TOLD ORIGINALLY THAT HARPOON WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE UNTIL 1978 AND, THEREFORE, HAD PURSUED FRENCH OFFER OF EXOCET DELIVERY IN 1975. ROKG CONSIDERED THAT RISK OF CONTINUED NAVAL INFERIORITY WAS GREATER THAN RISK OF CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM. THE PRIMIN REITERATED THAT EXOCET WAS INTENDED ONLY TO FILL TEMPORARY GAP UNTIL HARPOON COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE, THAT ROKG WANTED TO MAINTAIN COMPATIBILITY OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS WITH USG, AND THAT ROKG DID NOT SEEK NEW POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH FRANCE.

3. UNDERSEC MAW REPLIED THAT USG WANTS TO BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE AND HOPED A SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT ROKG HAD TO MAKE ITS OWN DECISION, HE REQUESTED THAT THE CEDISION BE DEFERRED UNTOL HE COULD OBTAIN MORE PRECISE INFORMATION ABOUT HARPOON AVAILABILITY DATES WHEN HE RETURNS TO WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK. I ADDED THAT WE WOULD TRY TO BE MORE HELPFUL AND SEE IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR A HARPOON DELIVERY SCHEDULE TO BE DEVELOPED THAT WOULD COINCIDE WITH THE AVAILABILITY DATES FOR THE NEW PSMMS.

4. THE PRIMIN'S ONLY EXPRESS COMMITMENT WAS THAT WHEN THE ONGOING EXOCET TEST WERE COMPLETED AND THE RESULTS WERE AVAILABLE, HE WOULD LET ME KNOW. HE EXPLAINED THAT THERE MIGHT BE PROBLEMS BECAUSE OF EXOCET'S WEIGHT IN RELATION TO SMALL CRAFT ON WHICH IT WOULD BE MOUNTED.

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5. REGARDING SUBMARINES, THE PRIMIN POINTED OUT THAT THE U.S. HAD NO EQUIVALENT SMALL SUBMARINE AND THE ROKG THEREFORE FOUND IT NECES ARY TO SEEK SUCH VESSELS FROM THE BRITISH. THE SUBMARINES WOULD NOT BECOME AVAILABLE UNTIL MORE THAN THREE YEARS HAD PASSED AND IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE ROKG TO PLAN ITS DEFENSE NEEDS THAT FAR IN ADVANCE. IT WAS AWARE OF CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC CRITICISM IN THE UNITED STATES OF THE CONTINUED

PRESENCE OF U.S. FORCE IN KOREA AND U.S. ASSISTANCE TO KOREA. IT WAS NECESSARY FOR KOREA TO BE PREPARED TO ASSUME THE BURDENS OF ITS OWN DEFENSE TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, RATHER THAN ASSUME IT COULD CONTINUE TO RELY UPON A U.S. PRESENCE. WE SUGGESTED DISCUSSIONS AT THE MILITARY LEVEL ON THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMARINES.

6. COMMENT: THIS IS THE STRONGEST EXPLICIT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT I HAVE RECEIVED THAT ROKG IS PROCEEDING WITH ITS DEFENSE PLANS ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT IT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO RELY UPON CONTINUED U.S. PRESENCE. IN THIS LIGHT, I BELIEVE OUR FURTHER EFFORTS REGARDING SUBMARINES WOULD BEST BE LEFT PRIMARILY TO DISCUSSIONS IN MILITARY CHANNELS OF ROK NEED FOR THESE VESSELS. WITH RESPECT TO MISSILES, PRIMIN'S OBVIOUS SENSITIVITY TO POLITICAL PROBLEMS, INCLUDING CONGRESSIONAL, REINFORCES IMPORTANCE OF TRYING TO BE RESPONSIVE TO PSMM DELIVERY SCHEDULE. I BELIEVE PRELIMINARY DECISION TO PURCHASE EXOCET MIGHT BE REVERSED, PERHAPS WITH AN EXPLANATION THAT TEST RESULTS WERE UNSATISFACTORY, IF WE CAN OFFER HARPOON DELIVERY IN TIME FRAME COINCIDING WITH PSMM AVAILABILITY. PSMM DELIVERY SCHEDULE HAS BEEN FORWARDED TO DEPARTMENT BY SEPTTEL (SEOUL 0313). UNDER SECRETARY MAW WILL REVIEW THIS PROBLEM WHEN HE RETURNS TO WASHINGTON. SNEIDER UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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